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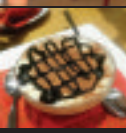
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THE sun shone down on residents in Queen's Road on Saturday as the street held its seventh annual Banbury Big Lunch.

With the good weather, children enjoyed a 'Copacabana Beach' on the street – there was also a rum punch stall for adults.

Samba music filled the air while residents got together to raise thousands of pounds for local charities.

This year's chosen charity was the Banbury Young Homelessness Project, and so far more than £500 has been collected.

Resident Steve Gold, who has lived in Queen's Road for about 20 years, said: "It was a hot day but people were very chilled out, it was quite a bit more relaxed this year."

More Big Lunch events will be held in Banbury this summer.

The beach comes to Banbury



FUNDS FLOOD IN AFTER THEFT

Hannah Somerville
hsomerville@nqo.com

INITIAL sadness at a robbery turned to joy for a cafe owner after the community rallied around in support.

Staff at Naomi's Cafe Bar in Bridge Street, Banbury were delighted when donations came flooding in this week after at least £150 was stolen from the bar on Saturday, May 28.

Owner Naomi Perkins, who opened the food and arts venue just over 18 months ago, said the week had been one of her personal highlights to date.

She said: "In a perverse way we have gained a lot more than if it hadn't happened.

"It's enough to have recouped the money, but it has equally been great to see everyone pull together. The support that has come from it is priceless."

Miss Perkins, 30, of King's Sutton, worked as a telesales manager and travelled the world before the idea for Naomi's came to her while meditating.

After a long period of deliberation and a leap of faith Naomi's was born in September 2014 with the help of family and friends.

Since then hundreds have flocked to



Cafe staff member Catherine Blay and owner Naomi Perkins

the cafe to enjoy arts and crafts, barbecues, themed and charity nights and to help out at the nearby Bridge Street Community Garden.

But on the Saturday evening, opportunist thieves entered the store while staff were preparing for a popular event, Handbags for Homeless, and made off with about £200 from a jar holding pay-as-you-feel donations from visitors.

Miss Perkins said: "We had a full day of trading in the day and the community garden was celebrating its first birthday.

"It happened during that lull when we were getting ready for the evening event. I'd asked someone to watch the shop and they were called outside; she stuck her head out of the door for a

couple of minutes and then the jar was gone, with no witnesses. It was really gutting. We're not flush with cash; it's hard running a business at the best of times."

Word quickly got around after a chance conversation with a customer the following day, Miss Perkins said, and the donations started rolling in.

An online whip-round gathered £130 for the cafe in a single day, and staff have been inundated with cards, flowers and extra tips.

Thames Valley Police spokesman Abell Jack said: "Officers are continuing to investigate the incident, and ask that anyone with any information contacts them via the non-emergency number 101."

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BHS to shut up shop as retailer is wound down



ONE of the Castle Quay Shopping Centre's biggest retailers is to close after BHS announced plans to shut all its UK stores.

Administrator Duff & Phelps said the business will be wound down and all 163 stores – including Banbury, above – would be sold to other retailers.

Banbury Town Council leader Kieron Mallon said he was confident a new store would take on the vacant unit in Castle Quay.

He said: "This is obviously a sad time for everyone involved in BHS, especially the staff."

"As our level of unemployment is at an all-time low I would hope that the unit will be filled by another retailer and that the people who worked there will find new jobs."

The retailer fell into administration in April, leaving behind a £571m pensions black hole and sparking an investigation by BHS into its demise.

Philip Duffy, managing director of Duff & Phelps, said: "The British high street is changing and, in these turbulent times for retailers, BHS has fallen as another victim."

"The tireless work of the management team and employees of BHS, with the support of my team, were not enough to change the fortunes of the company."

The retailer also has a department in the lights section at Debenhams in Oxford.

Castle Quay manager Paul Jackson declined to comment on the closure.

Scheme helps young adults read for health

Hannah Somerville
hsomerville@nqo.com

A SCHEME supporting teenagers' mental health through the power of reading is being rolled out at libraries across Oxfordshire.

The Reading Well book list is a range of expert-endorsed publications that may help youngsters cope with day-to-day and psychological problems.

Every item on the list, devised by national charity The Reading Agency, is now stocked and free to borrow at 12 libraries run by Oxfordshire County Council.

Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, the council's cabinet member for cultural and community services, said: "We're very pleased to be taking part in this scheme and hope that by reaching out in this way our libraries can help make a difference to young people's lives."

"There are many pressures that can weigh heavily on the shoulders of young people these days and the wisdom contained in these books might just help them navigate their way through a difficult patch, or help them understand what's going on in their head."

The books on the list may help youngsters cope with issues including anxiety, depression and self-harm, or tackle common pressures like bullying and exams.

Cabinet member for cultural and community services Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, left, with library staff Caroline Ising, Helen Fleet and Jane Marshall



They include self-help and non-fiction titles such as *Mind Your Head* by Juno Dawson and *Blame My Brain: The Amazing Teenage Brain Revealed* by Nicola Morgan, as well as popular novels such as *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon and *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky.

Ms Lindsay-Gale added: "The books are also a great read in their own right and can be enjoyed by everyone, so I would encourage

anyone interested to browse."

The Reading Well list is available at libraries in Banbury, Woodcote, Sonning Common, Littlemore, Bicester, Abingdon, Witney, Didcot, Cowley, Summertown, Thame and Wantage. The books can also be accessed by anyone online on the county council's libraries web-page.

Gaby Clement, an activist for mental health charity YoungMinds which helped select some of the titles, said: "I believe Reading Well

will challenge stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding mental illness, educating young people about mental health in general."

"Through relation to the characters, it can be a way of getting advice without being told what to do. We were looking for books which had relatable characters in fiction, and ones with positive resolutions."

■ To search for the books via the online catalogue visit the website libcat.oxfordshire.gov.uk.

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Developer pledges £12m for school and community centre

MORE than £12m is set to be invested in a new primary school and community centre for Banbury thanks to new housing.

Housebuilder Bellway Homes has pledged to inject the money as it builds 412 new homes at its Hanwell View development on

land off Southam Road. As part of the funding it will provide a new £4.9m primary school, leisure facilities and a community centre, local transport links and a new bus service for Hanwell Fields. Bellway sales director Chris Edginton said: "We're pleased

that we will not only be creating a new vibrant community, but also bolstering the town's existing appeal with our injection of funding."

The homes are the first phase of a proposed 510 properties that will be built.

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Talk to breathe life back into industrial heritage

Rosy Burke documented the Sapa Alcan aluminium factory before it closed back in 2008

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

THE sights and sounds of one of Banbury's oldest factories will be brought to life in a historical talk at the town's museum.

Shortly before the Sapa Alcan aluminium factory was closed in 2008, photographer Rosy Burke paid a visit and took photos and video of staff at work.

From walking around the site and speaking to workers, she created a photographic record of the factory that she will display at Banbury Museum on Saturday.

It will offer history enthusiasts and the local community a rare chance to see the images and video footage on screen and to discover an often forgotten part of the town's heritage.

Ms Burke, from Chacombe, said: "So much of Banbury's history took place in and around this factory. So many people and their grannies worked there."

"As the daughter of a metallurgist I am fascinated by the metal processes."

"This was such a privilege to be able to witness one of Banbury's most historic and dangerous industries and to record it for posterity before its sad closure."

The pictures, said to be never before seen in Banbury's town centre, show 62 members of staff, as well as the fires and furnaces.

Photographs also bring to life the pouring of the liquid aluminium, the extrusions and the factory's transport team.

The 53-acre Southam Road works were demolished seven years ago, except three buildings listed by English Heritage.

Banbury Civic Society pressed the charity to list as much as the former site as possible, but were told many of the buildings were not of adequate interest.

The parts of the site given grade II listed status included the art deco office building, gate posts and memorial garden.

Tickets can be purchased online at banburymuseum.org or in the museum shop.

■ Did you work at the factory? If so, call 01865 425433 or email kieran.davey@banburycake.co.uk



Sean Wilby, furnace operator, and Rosy Burke, photographer, in the cast house at Sapa Alcan aluminium factory in 2008; below clockwise from top left, British Aluminium Extrusions in 1998 the year the site closed; two of the largest pieces of the hot mill at the works, weighing 25 tons each, leave for shipment to Mexico in 1956; visitors watch Mr F Reynolds at work using a radial drill machine in the machine shop in 1956; one of the hot mills in which slabs of aluminium were rolled



Arrested at store

A MAN arrested for assaulting three police officers and a paramedic at a Sainsbury's supermarket is now in hospital.

Thames Valley Police were called to an incident at the Oxford Road store in Banbury about 10am on Monday.

Force spokesman Jack Abell said officers were called to a "fear for welfare" incident and a 47-year-old man was arrested for four assaults – three on officers and one on a paramedic.

Mr Abell added that the man has since been "de-arrested" and was now in hospital. He refused to say if the man was being treated in a mental hospital and said that he could be rearrested at a later date.

Big Lunch date

A BIG Lunch to bring Banbury's newest community in Longford Park together will be held later this month.

Residents in the new development, next to Bodicote, are invited to bring a picnic and get to know their neighbours on June 18.

The lunch is a nationwide incentive that encourages communities to get to know each other by sharing lunch together and building new friendships.

This is the second year the event has taken place at Longford Park.

Toy duck race

DOZENS of bright yellow ducks will take to the Sor Brook in Bodicote on Saturday in the build-up to this year's Bodfest.

The village's annual Duckfest lets people pay £1 to have their toy duck race against others on the water in a bid to win cash prizes.

The event will run from 3pm to 7pm.

It is the traditional curtain-raiser to the annual Bodfest festival, which will be held on July 9 and features a novelty dog show, a street market and music.

Father convicted over images

A DAD-OF-FIVE has been found guilty of possessing nearly 1,500 indecent images of children.

Police swooped on the Banbury home of Adrian King in April 2014 and seized a Hewlett-Packard laptop, Packard Bell laptop and Samsung Galaxy phone.

After investigating the devices, officers found 1,494 indecent images of children – 63 in the highest category.

King denied three counts of possessing indecent images of children.

But a jury of nine men and three women at Oxford Crown Court on Thursday

unanimously found the 34-year-old guilty of all the crimes.

The court heard how the father-of-five had 63 Category A images, 945 Category B images and 486 Category C images on laptops kept in the family home between November 2013 and April 2014.

Helen Guest, prosecuting, told the jury on Tuesday there had been specific searches on the device for images of children.

She said: "The defendant had been searching for images of children and the reason the crown says that is

because there was evidence of websites having been accessed."

"During his interview he denied all knowledge of indecent images on the device, he had no idea of how they came to be on there. He was at a complete loss."

In court on Wednesday, King, of Beaumont Close, denied all knowledge of the pictures and claimed he did not know how they came to be on his laptop.

King was released on conditional bail; sentencing will be at the same court on June 30.

Engine works decision due

THE fate of a dilapidated steam engine works on Banbury's Canalside will be decided on Thursday.

Councillors decided to defer a decision on the 150-year-old building, previously Chervell Iron Works, from the district council's planning meeting last month.

The plans are to replace the building with six commercial units, but the decision was delayed while planning officers looked at alternative options for the site.

The meeting will take place at Bodicote House in Bodicote, starting at 4pm.

Members of the public are welcome to attend.

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SCALES OF JUSTICE

A ROUND-UP of cases heard recently at Oxford and Banbury magistrates' courts. **OXFORD**

Christopher Knowles, 39, of no fixed abode, found guilty in his absence of driving a car in Lockheed Close, Banbury, without third party insurance and without a licence on December 18 last year. Handed a £660 fine and ordered to pay a £66 victim surcharge and £85 costs. Given six points.

Charlotte Green, 27, of Bretch Hill, Banbury, admitted driving a car in The Fairway, Banbury, without third party insurance on October 5 last year. Handed a £150 fine and ordered to pay a £20 victim surcharge and £85 costs.

BANBURY

Lorraine Deas, 59, of Waltham Gardens, Banbury, admitted using a colour television at home without a licence on March 8. Fined £60 and ordered to pay a £20 victims' surcharge and £120 costs.

Patrick Broderick, 44, of Parsley Place, Banbury, was convicted of failing to hand over a ticket for inspection at Banbury Railway Station on March 11. Fined £220 and ordered to pay a £22 victim surcharge and £4.90 compensation.

Kendal Craig, 48, of Lennox Gardens, Banbury, admitted assaulting Donna Craig by beating her in Banbury on March 2 this year. Handed

a community order with a rehabilitation activity requirement of up to 25 days. Ordered to pay a £60 victim surcharge and £85 costs.

Matthew Elkington, 35, of Bretch Hill, Banbury, admitted drink-driving in Cherwell Street, Banbury, on April 29 this year. Had 75 microgrammes of alcohol in 100ml of breath, above 35 microgram limit. Also admitted driving in the same street on the same day without third party insurance and without a driving licence. Handed a £120 fine and ordered to pay £30 victim surcharge and £85 costs. Banned for three years.

John Ferguson, 73, of Parklands, Banbury, admitted drink-driving in Queensway, Banbury, on April 25 this year. Had 64 microgrammes of alcohol in 100ml of breath, above 35 microgram limit. Handed a £120 fine and ordered to pay a £30 victim surcharge and £85 costs. Banned for 17 months.

Brandon McElvaine, 25, Freemans Road, Bodicote, admitted possessing a controlled drug of Class B, cannabis, in Banbury on April 24 this year and commissioning a further offence while subject to a suspended sentence imposed by Banbury Magistrates' Court on June 26 last year for possessing 32.64g of cannabis with intent to supply. Given a £120 fine and ordered to pay £30 victim surcharge and £85 costs.



Young talents look up to ex-NBA star

Children at Warriner School with Priest Lauderdale, left

YOUNG basketball players from the Banbury area have been given a masterclass this week by one of the tallest players in NBA history.

At seven foot four inches, Priest Lauderdale dominates any court he walks on to, but this week the former Denver Nuggets star has been passing on his knowledge to children at Warriner School in Bloxham.

Head coach Richard Moses said: "We are very grateful to Priest for taking the time to visit the kids here at our Warriner session."

"Everyone's had a great time and I think it's something they will remember for a long time."

With the help of coaches, children have been taught some of basketball's essential skills including dribbling and shooting.

Last week the former NBA star visited an

after-school session at the school as part of the newly-formed Banbury Basketball Club, which has been set up in partnership with the North Oxfordshire School Sport Partnership and Cherwell District Council.

Last month the former centre also helped run lessons at the Oxford Spire Academy, as Oxford City Hoops ambassador.

For more information on the club, email banburybasketball@gmail.com.

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Charity's joy at royal award for reading project

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

A VOLUNTARY reading group that works in schools in Banbury has been recognised for the work it has done helping children to love books.

Assisted Reading for Children in Oxfordshire (ARCh) was handed the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award a charity can receive in this country.

The Bicester charity recruits, trains and supports volunteers to work one-on-one with children in primary schools across the county.

More than 250 volunteers currently work in more than 100 schools, including in Banbury, Bicester and Oxford.

Development managers Elaine Adams and Jane Rendle went to a garden party at Buckingham Palace on May 24 to celebrate, but the award was not officially announced until last week.

Ms Adams said: "It was a delight and great honour to attend



ARCh volunteers and staff celebrate the award

the magnificent garden party at the palace on behalf of all our volunteers who do such a wonderful job supporting Oxfordshire's children each day.

"We would like to encourage more people to join ARCh and change a child's life, so do give us a call to find out more."

The award will be officially handed over by Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire Tim Stevenson later this summer at a ceremony at Cokethorpe School in Witney.

He said: "I am absolutely delighted that ARCh has won this prestigious and rightly coveted award."

"The strength of the ARCh model, the support the organi-

sation gives to kids and its engagement, training and support for its wonderful team of volunteers is exemplary."

Last month, ARCh was named charity of the year at the Banbury community awards, after being chosen by outgoing mayor Tony Mepham.

And last year it received a grant of £3,900 from the Gannett Foundation, the charity arm of the Banbury Cake's US owners, Gannett Media, to buy a host of new books.

ARCh recently started a drive to get more volunteers to join up, as they have a waiting list of about 30 schools around the county.

It was one of nearly 200 charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to have received a Queen's Award this year.

Former broadcast journalist Sir Martyn Lewis, who is committee chair for the awards, said: "The judging panel for this year's awards were struck by the quality and breadth of all the successful groups."

■ To find out more about ARCh visit archoxfordshire.org.uk

Invitation to royal party for blind forces veteran

Mr Cantwell, 68, will represent Blind Veterans UK at the event

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

A BLIND RAF veteran from Banbury will get the chance to meet royalty next week as part of the celebrations for the Queen's 90th birthday.

John Cantwell, 68, has been chosen to represent charity Blind Veterans UK at the Patron's Lunch on the Mall outside Buckingham Palace on June 12.

The lunch is being held to recognise more than 600 organisations that hold Her Majesty's patronage.

Mr Cantwell joined the Royal Air Force in 1970 and was part of the Motor Transport Division, having first trained at RAF St Athan in South Wales.

He was stationed as far afield as Anguilla and Cyprus, where he met his wife Elaine, who was working as an RAF nurse.

At the lunch he will represent Blind Veterans UK, the national charity for blind and vision-impaired ex-service-men and women.

He said: "My wife and I were lucky enough to meet the Countess of Wessex recently, when we were invited for tea with a fellow blind veteran who had made her a bird box for her garden.

"Neither of us have ever met the Queen though.

"I, and all blind veterans, are hugely proud to be part of a charity that has the Queen as its patron, and I know that it will be a fantastic day."

Mr Cantwell joined the charity six years ago after suffering from a genetic skin disease called keratosis pilaris – or "chicken skin" disease.

Although the disease has never troubled him, a side effect he experienced after leaving the RAF in 1980 was that it made him lose his sight.

He said: "It was very gradual so I had time to adjust.

"The doctors told me they couldn't do anything to fix my eyes, which strangely was a blessing as I had to accept it.

"It made me adapt to my circumstances.



John Cantwell, left, training for his 100k challenge with Mark Hollis, activities team leader for Blind Veterans UK

"When you lose your sight you're in a shell, and you do not realise what you can do. Blind Veterans showed me what was possible, and now I do a full range of activities."

Since joining the charity Mr Cantwell has taken part in skiing, cycling and archery, as well as organising a local lunch club for other blind veterans.

Later this month the veteran will also be taking on a 100-kilometre walk in just 24 hours to raise money for Blind Veterans UK.

He will join a team of blind veterans in Yorkshire, and at 68 is thought to be the oldest walker taking part.

■ To sponsor him go to justgiving.com/JohnCantwell

OAP purse theft

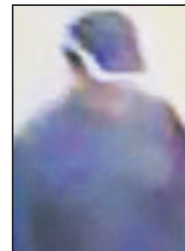
POLICE have released CCTV after a purse was stolen from an elderly lady in Banbury town centre.

Between about 10.40am and 11am on Saturday the woman was walking along High Street towards the Castle Quay shopping centre when she realised her purse had been stolen from her handbag.

It contained her debit card, store cards and cash.

The cards were later used at 11.06am and 11.14am to try and withdraw money from an ATM at Barclays Bank in High Street.

Call police on 101 with any information.



Toasting Queen

VISITORS to Cornhill Community Centre in Banbury will be getting together on Thursday to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday.

There will be a range of activities including a light lunch, 1940s songs performed by local singer Sarah Mellor, and birthday celebrations for all local people who have reached their 90th year.

The fun starts from 11am, until 2pm, at the Royal Voluntary Service community centre and cafe in Castle Street.

Entry is free although there is a suggested donation of £3.50.

Stepping out on a Midnight Walk

HUNDREDS of excited volunteers are expected to step out in aid of Katharine House Hospice later this month.

The hospice is holding its 10th annual Midnight Walk on Saturday, June 25, and is aiming to register the largest number of walkers in the event's history.

Last year 308 people took on the illuminated 10-mile route around Banbury for fun, to improve their fitness, or in memory of their family and friends.

So far more than 550 walkers have signed up this year, heading up towards the record of 743 set in 2009.

Communications officer Chris Higgins said: "The walk is a great night out with a

fantastic atmosphere. The funds we raise from the Midnight Walk ensure we can continue to provide care to patients in local villages and towns as well as here at the hospice."

The money will go towards some of the running costs at Katharine House, in Adderbury, which cares for about 800 people per year and needs £3.6m annually to keep going.

Registration for this year's event costs £20 and the closing date for entries is June 23.

Entries on the night will be restricted to friends and family of pre-registered walkers and will cost £50.

To register go online at khh.org.uk

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Dance, dogs and daring stunts at free family fair



Event will have a Royal theme to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday

a Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

DARING stunt riders, thrilling dog races and traditional marching bands will all be entertaining the crowds at this year's Banbury and District Show.

And this year the show, on June 12 in Spiceball Park, will also have the Queen's 90th birthday as a royal theme. The free entry event will also have a range of funfair rides, stalls, go-karts and food stands for visitors to enjoy. Councillor Colin Clarke from Banbury Town Council said: "The show is a terrific family day out and can be enjoyed completely free of charge. "There will also be many opportunities to spend money and I hope everyone has a fabulous time." Dog lovers will lap up a display in the main arena by the Banbury Cross Flyball Club, in which canines will race each other to reach a tennis ball and bring it back to their owners.



The City of Coventry Corps of Drums will be putting on a marching display, while there will be an area set aside where visitors can pay tribute to the Queen's life.

The band is one of the longest-running in the country with a history that goes back more than 60 years. Audiences will also be dazzled as the Xtreme Stunt Team prepares to thrill onlookers with a daring display in the main arena. The Up 'n' Over Dog Training Club's fun dog show will have

Dancers from Julie Bruce Dance Academy, top, entertain the crowd at last year's Banbury and District Show; left, Martin Brock with his ferrets before the start of the ferret race

nine classes open for family pets, including most handsome, waggiest tail, best junior handler and the dog judges would most like to take home. Also appearing will be local dance groups and the Brackley Brass Band. A giant TV screen will show birthday celebrations and historical film footage including the coronation and other significant events of The Queen's life. And to celebrate, men, women and children are all invited to come along in their best royal attire. The show will run from 10.30am to 4.30pm.

Failure to pay teachers prompts apology

TEACHERS at some Oxfordshire schools have received an apology after they were not paid on time. Kier Group, which is responsible for paying staff at some of the county's academies, said it had fallen short of its "high standards" after payments were not made on Tuesday. It was unable to say which schools were affected but it is

believed they were located in Didcot, Bloxham and Wallingford. The company said any outstanding payments should have been made by yesterday. Spokeswoman Lisa Sanders said: "We apologise for the salary payment delay that has affected employees at a small number of Oxfordshire academies. "This falls short of our high

standards and we are working hard to resolve the situation. We can confirm that all payments were in accounts tomorrow, and any bank charges incurred as a result of this late payment will be reimbursed in full." Kier Group describes itself as a "leading provider of HR and payroll services to the UK public sector."

Man is wanted over bus assault

POLICE have released images of the man suspected of assaulting a woman in her sixties on a Banbury bus.



The incident occurred on Tuesday, May 17, between 11.40am and noon on the B5 Stagecoach bus. It took place while the bus was travelling through Lower Cherwell Street and Bridge Street. While the victim was sitting on the bus the man moved to sit next to her and pressed himself against her. When the bus arrived in the town centre, the victim attempted to leave the vehicle, and was again touched inappropriately by the offender. The man is described as Asian and in his mid to late sixties with grey hair swept back. He had no facial hair and light brown eyes. He is slim, about 5ft 6in tall, and was wearing a cream long-sleeved jumper with a roll neck and brown trousers. He was carrying a black zip-up bag, and was wearing gold rings and a plaited bracelet. Please call 101 with any information.

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Road rut may have caused fatal crash

A MARRIED couple described as "loving and devoted" died on Boxing Day after their car hit a roadside ditch and crashed into a horsebox, an inquest heard.

John Forester, 67, and Lesley Forester, 58, were on the A436 near Stow-on-the-Wold in Gloucestershire on the last leg of a Christmas trip to see family in Wales when they crashed head-on with the heavy-duty vehicle, which was carrying three horses.

The impact caused the Banbury couple's black Kia to spin across the road and the horsebox rolled onto its side. Gloucester Coroner's Court heard on Tuesday how the couple sustained "substantial" injuries and died at the scene.

Speaking after the inquest, the couple's son Michael Forester said: "Dad was a loving father and grandfather. Mum was loving and kind. She was a valued member of the community, particularly at the school where she worked for 19 years."

Crash investigator PC David Langridge explained part of A436 had "crumbled" away, leaving a gully 27 metres long and at some points 9cm deep. Tyre marks showed the Kia dropped into the gully, suggesting Mr Forester had tried to steer the car out the ditch, pulling them into the path of the horsebox.

Senior coroner Kate Skerrett ruled the couple died from multiple injuries from a road traffic collision.

Hospice charity run lifts rainbow of hope for kids

Colourful fundraiser event organised by charity which helps terminally ill children

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

FUN-LOVING fundraisers in their hundreds ran through a rainbow of colours in the name of charity last weekend.

More than 800 people turned out for Helen & Douglas House's Rainbow Run on Saturday, which saw participants pelted with powdered paint.

The Oxford-based charity, which cares for terminally ill children, was honoured by colour-coated crowds in Cutteslowe Park in North Oxford.

Banbury couple Helene and Adam Gentry, running in memory of daughter Lorna Willow Gentry, who died of a brain tumour last year, were among a team of 12 running in her name.

Mrs Gentry, 37, said: "It's to help raise money and have a bit of fun. We wear yellow because it was Lorna's favourite colour."

Her husband Adam, also 37, added: "Lorna had a trachea fitted and they said she would never swim again, which she loved to do. But



The family of Lorna Willow Gentry, who joined the Helen and Douglas House's Rainbow Run, above right, in her memory

with Helen & Douglas's hydrotherapy pool she could. It was the one thing she would look forward to.

"Running has really helped me to grieve. Lorna is my inspiration."

A 28-strong team also turned out in memory of beloved Bicester boy Thomas Laurie, who died in Helen

& Douglas House's hospice aged nine after suffering from rare Cockayne Syndrome, which causes premature ageing.

Mum Catherine Laurie, 44, said: "We know how important it is for families still going through tough times. It's been two years since he



died and we are still very much supported by them. It's a lifelong thing.

"It really was a home from home for Thomas. I wish he had been alive to come to this – he would have loved the paint."

Thomas' 14-year-old sister Ellie, who also ran, still attends the charity's sibling support group the Elephant Club.

Former Helen & Douglas House employee Kim Rowe, from Abingdon, ran with daughters Amy, 11, and Danielle, nine, who ended the race barely recognisable after being drenched with coloured powdered pigments.

Mrs Rowe said: "There were people on the floor who scooped up the paint and threw it."

"We definitely recommend it, it was really fun."

Hannah Barrett, events manager for Helen & Douglas House, said: "It's about living life to the full and supporting each other. It reflects our positive atmosphere."

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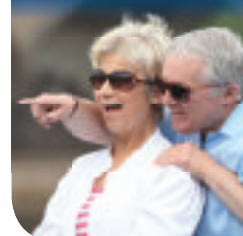
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Vague glimpses of comedy

THE BOSS (15, 99 mins) Comedy/Drama/Romance. **Melissa McCarthy, Kristen Bell, Peter Dinklage, Ella Anderson, Tyler Labine, Kathy Bates, Cedric Yarbrough, Margo Martindale.** **Director: Ben Falcone**

WHAT a difference two years makes.

In the summer of 2014, actress Melissa McCarthy and husband Ben Falcone ended her winning streak of hilarious big-screen comedies with the misfiring road movie *Tammy*.

Love and marriage didn't come together in a script packed with belly laughs.

The Boss improves on its predecessor in one crucial respect: it is sporadically funny.

However, husband and wife haven't learnt from past transgressions. They haven't invested enough time in fully realising the characters and they risk a hostile takeover from mawkish sentiment.

Michelle Darnell (McCarthy) was raised at the Blessed Sisters Of Mercy orphanage, where efforts to find the youngster a loving, adopted family ended in disappointment.

Emboldened by her humiliating ordeal, Michelle becomes America's 47th richest woman until her dubious ethics result in a five-year prison sentence for insider trading.

She emerges without any friends to greet her.

Her bodyguard 'Tito' (Cedric Yarbrough) has abandoned her and long-suffering personal assistant Claire Rawlings (Kristen Bell) has a young daughter Rachel (Ella Anderson) to nurture.

In desperation, Michelle turns up unannounced on Claire's doorstep and takes up temporary residence on a temperamental sofa bed.

Michelle resolves to rebuild her empire by creating a flourishing chocolate brownie business from Claire's secret recipe.

Moderate success brings the

shamed business mogul back into contact with her aggrieved rival, Renault (Peter Dinklage), and former mentor Ida Marquette (Kathy Bates).

The Boss is a pleasant, fleeting diversion that fulfils the most basic requirement of a comedy: it makes you laugh.

MOTHER'S DAY (12A, 118 mins) Comedy/Drama/Romance.

Jennifer Aniston, Kate Hudson, Jason Sudeikis, Julia Roberts, Britt Robertson, Jack Whitehall, Sarah Chalke, Robert Pine, Margo Martindale, Timothy Olyphant, Shay Mitchell, Jessi Case, Ella Anderson, Brandon Spink, Caleb Brown, Hector Elizondo, Jennifer Garner.

Director: Garry Marshall.

DIRECTOR Garry Marshall assembles a stellar cast for this sickly sweet comedy drama, which contemplates the enduring power of the maternal bond.

Screenwriters Anya Kochoff Romano, Matt Walker and Tom Hines aren't content with signposting every predictable plot point in expository dialogue.

They bludgeon us with superfluous detail.

Thorny subjects of homophobia and racism are addressed with discomfiting glibness and the all-consuming grief of losing a parent is salved with greetings card platitudes.

Single mother Sandy Newhouse (Aniston) is stunned when her ex-husband Henry (Timothy Olyphant) confides he has just married his girlfriend Tina (Shay Mitchell).

Nearly, widower Bradley Barton (Sudeikis) is haunted by the death of his soldier wife (Jennifer Garner).

Meanwhile, Kristin (Britt Robertson) continues to rebuff marriage proposals from her stand-up comedian beau, Zack (Jack Whitehall), because she lacks a physical connection to her biological mother.

With encouragement from her friend Jesse (Hudson), Kristin



Melissa McCarthy as Michelle Darnell in *The Boss*; inset, Jennifer Aniston as Sandy Newhouse and Kate Hudson as Jesse in *Mother's Day*

confronts her missing link – glamorous home shopping doyenne Miranda Collins (Roberts).

As for Jesse and her lesbian sister Gabi (Sarah Chalke), they are hoarding plenty of secrets from their God-fearing Texan parents, Earl (Robert Pine) and Flo (Margo Martindale).

Mother's Day is a glossy waste of everyone's talents and our precious time. The script is saturated with saccharine emotion including a bizarre scene between Aniston and a children's party clown, who philosophises, "It's always the simple things that work... the bottomless love of a mother for her kids."

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It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

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that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done. We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole.'

Cloudy2Clear service the Oxford, Banbury & Abingdon areas and Trevor is finding that his approach is a major factor

in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show

how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Trevor a call for a free quotation on 0800 61 21 118 and he'll be happy to help!



CakeWhat's on

Becoming Nicole: The Extraordinary Transformation Of An Ordinary Family by **Amy Ellis Nutt**, is published in paperback by Atlantic, priced £12.99

THIS is the inspiring, New York Times bestselling true story of a transgender girl and her family's journey to understand, help and celebrate her uniqueness. Wayne and Ellis Maines are a very normal and hardworking American couple and after failing to conceive their own children, are given the opportunity to adopt the identical twin boys of Kelly's second cousin. When Jonas and Wyatt start to develop their own personalities, it becomes clear that the boys like different things; Wyatt imagines he is the Little Mermaid and likes to dress up in his tutu. However, more than that, at the age of three, declares he "hates" his penis and asks: "When do I get to be a girl?". A compelling, enlightening and informative read.

The Crime Writer by **Jill Dawson** is published in hardback by Sceptre, priced £18.99 (ebook £12.99)

MELODRAMA and suspense are the twin pillars of this novel which echoes the turmoil of psychological thriller writer Patricia Highsmith's life. Prowlers in the night, guilt and compulsive behaviour are all centre stage in this homage to Highsmith, as author Jill Dawson imagines the minute detail of a few key months in 1964. The hard-drinking, chain-smoking, socially inept Highsmith is holed up in a Suffolk village, supposedly to finish a novel, but planning secret assignments with her married lover. Twisty, tumultuous and irritating in parts, but never boring.

The Nest by **Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney** is published in hardback by The Borough Press, priced £12.99 (ebook £5.99)

WITH one of the best opening lines for a book I've read in a long

time, LA-based Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney plunges her readers into the chaotic lives of the Plumb family, which all revolve around the charismatic golden boy Leo. After one thoughtless act of lust (drink-driving away from a family wedding with a young waitress in tow) which ends in disaster, Leo lands in rehab and his mother bails him out by using the family trust fund, the so-called Nest of the title, which each grown-up child had a particular need for. There's gay antiques dealer Jack, who's been secretly borrowing against his husband's beach house to keep his business afloat, Melody, who wants to give her twin daughters the best education, and writer Beatrice, who's desperately trying to finish her novel. After the pacey beginning, D'Aprix Sweeney takes her foot off the gas, but she captures the ugly, personal side of capitalism and the dysfunctional family dynamics with aplomb.

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Oxfordshire Listings

Events

THURSDAY

2016 Tanner Lecture – Dame Shirley Williams: Mathematical Institute, Oxford University, Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, Oxford. The value of Europe and European values. 5.30pm. Free. 01865 271658.

Carer’s Week: Sainsbury’s supermarket, 12-14 Market Place, Chipping Norton. Groups and in store to help raise awareness for carers in our community. Stroke awareness will take your blood pressure for. 9.30am. Free. 01608 642579.

Ceremonies, Repatriation and Shrunk Heads – Curator-led Guided Tour: Pitt Rivers Museum, entry via South Door, Robinson Close, Parks Road, Oxford. Laura Peers has worked with the First Nations and Native American groups to develop relationships around the Museum’s extraordinary collections of treasures. 5.30pm. £25. 01865 270927.

East Hagbourne Scarecrow Trail: New Road, Main Road, Blewbury Road, East Hagbourne. Shakespeare and all that. Maps available for £1 from the East Hagbourne Community Shop and The Fleur de Lys. 10am. 01235 813826.

Meet the Author – Colin Higgs: Middleton Cheney Library, Main Road, Middleton Cheney. Colin Higgs has interviewed RAF veterans over the last 20 years and has produced a book titled *The Dambusters, the creation of a unique Squadron 1943/45*. 7.30pm. Adult £6 / child £3. 01295 712949.

FRIDAY

Etch Food: Blenheim Palace, Woodstock. An exclusive dining experience with Steven Edwards, winner of *MasterChef: The Professionals* 2013. 7pm. £75 per person.

Folk for MS Ceilidh! (Barn Dance): Old Mill Hall, School Lane, Grove. 8pm. £9 adults, £4.50 u16s. 07855 548512.

Night-time Safari: Sutton Courtenay Environmental Education Centre, Sutton Courtenay Road, Sutton Courtenay. Learn to use bat detectors to hear bats hunting overhead, lamps to spot newts and frogs in the ponds, help our nature reserve team check the small mammal traps and have a look at moth trap to see how we monitor and survey insects. For children aged 7+, no younger accompanying siblings. 7.30pm. £10 per child, accompanying adults free. 01235 862024.

Photofunday: EOS magazine, The Old Barn, Ball Lane, Tackley. Two days of photography fun, with lots to shoot and more to learn. Birds of prey both days, plus 17th century themed activities to celebrate the 400-year history of our buildings. On Friday get up close to Punch and Judy and on Saturday watch a civil war re-enactment. There will also be mini workshops, Canon product experts, advice and photographic equipment old and new to explore. 12pm. Free. 01869 331741.

SATURDAY

A Trip to the Ally – Alcan Revisited: Banbury Museum, Spiceball Park Road, Banbury. For many years Banbury’s aluminium factory was a major part of the town’s life. Shortly before it closed in 2008, Rosy Burke created a photographic record of the site, while there was still fire in the furnaces and power in the press. This is a rare chance to see these images and video footage on the big screen and discover or remember this part of the town’s heritage. 2pm. £5. 01295 753752.

Bicester and Kidlington Ramblers: The Green, Quainton. Leisurely nine-mile circular walk in the Quainton area. Picnic lunch. Leader Lionel Howse. 10am.

Crowmarsh Summer Fete and Flower Festival: St Mary Magdalene Church, The Street, Crowmarsh Gifford. 12pm. £2 per adult, £1 per child, £5 for families. 07770 930756.

Flags and Crowns: The Mix Community Space, 15 Mill Street, Wantage. Get ready to join in the Queen’s birthday celebrations by making yourself a flag or crown (or both). All materials provided from our Resource Bank. 10am. Suggested donation £1. 07768 767787.

Is There a Doctor in the House?: Museum of the History of Science, Broad Street, Oxford. Discover the art of medicine through objects, stories and activities. Drop-in. Suitable for ages 9+. 2pm. Free. 01865 277280.

Ramblers walk: St Mary’s Church, Charlton on Otmoor. Seven-mile walk via Oddington, Noke and the RSPB reserve. 10.30am. 07808 632832.

Ramsden Summer Fete and Companion Dog Show: Wynters Field, High Street, Ramsden. 1pm. 01993 868 764.

Woodstock Primary School PTA Car Boot Sale: Woodstock Primary School, Shipton Road, Woodstock. 10am. Free admission for buyers.

SUNDAY

Bicester’s Big Lunch: Sheep Street, Pioneer Square, Crown Walk, Bicester. The whole community is invited to come together to share lunch. Featuring live music on two stages, stalls, street entertainment, face painting and more. 11am. Free. 07583 500812.

National Gardens Scheme: Broughton Grange, Wykhams Lane, Broughton. An impressive 25 acres of gardens and light woodland in an attractive Oxfordshire setting. Teas and light refreshments. Plant sale. 10am. Adult £7, chd free.

Shilton Open Gardens: Shilton village, near Burford. Around a dozen gardens, large and small, open 2-6pm. £5, children free. 01993 842404.

MONDAY

Indoor Bowls (short-mat): Drayton Village Hall, Lockway, Drayton. 1.45pm. Nominal. 01235 528402.

Mums Meet Mondays: Rugrats and Halpints, Beaumont Road, Banbury. 9.30am. £1 per child. 01295 250060.

TUESDAY

Bicester and Kidlington Ramblers: Hensington Road car park, Hensington Road, Woodstock. Leisurely four-mile circular walk round Blenheim Park. Leader Mary Gough. 10am. 07939 826412.

Cafe Scientifique (age 16+): Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot. Doors open 7pm, Speaker 7.30pm. Free. 01235 515144.

National Gardens Scheme: Greys Court, Rotherfield Greys, Henley on Thames. The tranquil gardens cover 9 acres and surround a Tudor house with many alterations, as well as a Donkey Wheel. Extensive lawns and an arboretum and small maze including walled garden. Meet the gardeners and volunteers who help in the garden. Wheelchair access. Homemade teas and light refreshments. 10am. Adult £4, chd free. 01491 628529.

WEDNESDAY

Basket Weaving: Earth Trust Centre, Little Wittenham. Make a simple Catalan style basket out of willow with local weaver Christine Brewster. Booking essential. 6pm. £25. 01865 407792.

National Gardens Scheme: Wootton Gardens, Wootton Abingdon. Six inspirational small gardens. One new one: 13 Amey Crescent. The gardens provide year-round interest. Partial wheelchair access. Plant sale. Homemade teas. 1.30pm. Combined Adult £5, chd free.

To get an event of any kind listed here, enter the details into our easy-to-use online database at thisisoxfordshire.co.uk/events

Please add your event no later than ten days before the day of publication.

Music

THURSDAY

Harris Manchester College, Mansfield Road, Oxford: Between Sean and Sky. Contemporary and traditional song-writing. Stephanie West, harp and voice. Free with retiring collection. 1.30pm. 01865 271006.

Merton College, Merton Street, Oxford: Merton College Chapel Organ Recitals. Benjamin Cunningham, Worcester College and Organ Scholar-elect Westminster Abbey. Free. 1.15pm.

Sheldonian Theatre, Broad Street, Oxford: Sleeping Sense. A concert combining cutting-edge research with sublime music. Working with the Sleep and Circadian Neuroscience Institute, and young musicians and pupils around Oxford, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment has been composing new music inspired by the science of sleep and circadian biology. Features soprano Elin Manahan Thomas and harpsichordist Christopher Bucknall plus world-leading circadian expert Professor Russell Foster. Free but must book sleeping-sense. eventbrite.co.uk. 7pm. 01865 223357.

Steventon Village Hall, The Green, Steventon: 90 Glorious Years of Popular Music with Steventon Choral Society. £8 (accompanied children free). 7.30pm. 01235 848292.

Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, New Inn Hall Street, Oxford: Lunchtime concert. Free. 12.45pm. 01865 243216.

The Wheatsheaf, 129 High Street, Oxford: The Spin 17th Birthday Bash featuring John Etheridge, jazz guitarist with the Spin Trio. 8.30pm. £12, £10 (conc), £8 (student).

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: The Cult of Dom Keller plus The Neon Violets and Masiro. Psych rockers supported by two local artists. 7pm. £6 (adv).

New Theatre, Oxford, 2 George Street, Oxford: The ELO Experience. Tribute. 7.30pm. £25.90.

The Library Pub, 182 Cowley Road, Oxford: Tenth Listen, Kanchol, Cowley Chainsaws. Punk. 8pm. Free.

The Cock Inn, Combe: Nick Gill. Classic jazz and ragtime piano/vocals. 8pm. Free.

FRIDAY

02 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Kool Nuh Tour – Big Tobz & Friends. Paigey Cakey, YoungTribex, Baseman, SNE. £15. 7pm. 0844 477 2000.

Angel, Market Square, Witney: Resurrection. Rock and pop duo. Free. 9pm. 01993 703238.

Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot: Plantec. French band with new Celtic style of electro-folk rock. £15, £13.50 (cons). 8pm. 01235 515144.

Modern Art Oxford, 30 Pembroke Street, Oxford: The Amazons. Four-piece rock band from Reading. Free. 8pm. 01865 722733.

The James Street Tavern, James Street, Oxford: Mudslide Morris & the Revelators. 9pm.

The Northcourt (Abingdon Utd FC), 3 Northcourt Road, Abingdon: Tess of The Circle. Acoustic and electric original rock. £10 advance, £12 door. 7.30pm. 01235 856076.

The White House, Abingdon Road, Oxford: Steve Turner. Oxford Folk Club. £6. 8.30pm. 01865 768128.

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Big Deal plus guests. London-based indie band. 7pm. £7 (adv).

New Theatre, Oxford, 2 George Street, Oxford: YolanDa Brown – Reggae Love Songs with guests Michelle Williams and Lemar. 8pm. £27.90.

SATURDAY

Town Centre, Sheep Street, Pioneer Square, Crown Walk, Bicester: Queen’s 90th Birthday Concert. Brilltones and Bustin’ Loose. Gates open 6pm, music from 6.30pm. Free. 07583 500812.

St Peter’s Church, Thames Street, Wallingford: Adi Tal (cello) and Nicola Eimer (piano). £14 or £12 in advance. 8pm. 01491 824792.

Merton College, Merton Street, Oxford: Merton College Chapel Organ Festival. Thomas Ospital. £12/£5 for students. 4pm.

SJE Arts, St John The Evangelist Church Ifley Road, Oxford: Commotio and Bob Chilcott. £12 (£8 concessions). 7.30pm.

St Bartholomew’s Church, Church Road, Ducklington: Songs on a Summer Evening. Brize Singers Summer Concert with Ducklington Handbell Ringers. Adults £6, children £2. 7.30pm. 01993 703032.

St James Church, Beauchamp Lane, Oxford: An evening of music in celebration of the Queen’s Birthday. The Oxford Welsh Male Voice Choir. £10. 7pm. 01865 775150.

St Matthew’s Church, Church Lane, Harwell: Swing into Summer. Concert with Crescendo A Cappella Singers. £10, including refreshments. 7.30pm. 07930 998221.

St Michaels at the Northgate, Cornmarket, Oxford: Sine Nomine in concert. International touring choir. £12. 7.30pm. 01865 305305.

Steventon Village Hall, The Green, Steventon: 90 Glorious Years of Popular Music with Steventon Choral Society. £8 (accompanied children free). 7.30pm. 01235 848292.

The Queen’s College, Shulman Auditorium, High Street, Oxford: The Eglesfield Musical Society Saturday Recital Series. Richard Fu, Camellia Johnson, Sally Law, Emma Quan. Chamber Group: piano, clarinet and violins. Free with a retiring collection. 1.30pm. 01865 279120.

Tingewick Hall, John Radcliffe Hospital, Headington: Radcliffe Orchestra Concert. £10 (£8 concessions; under 16 free). 7.45pm. 01865 510036.

University Church of St Mary the Virgin, High Street, Oxford: The Nature of Love – City of Oxford Choir. £12 (concessions £10, under 18s £8). 7.30pm. 01865 305305.

The White House, 38 Abingdon Road, Oxford: Johnny’s Sexual Kitchen. Blues. 9pm. Free.

New Theatre, 2 George Street, Oxford: Abba Mania. ABBA tribute band. 7.30pm. £18.90-£22.90.

SUNDAY

Jacqueline du Pre Music Building, St Hilda’s College, Cowley Place, Oxford: Patsy Wood Family Prom. £6 prom, £8 balcony, £20 family (4 proms). 3.30pm. 01865 286660.

Oxford Wine Café, 38 South Parade, Summertown, Oxford: Guitar Fiesta. Three guitar players together for the first time. 6.30-9pm. Free.

MONDAY

Wolfson College, Linton Road, Oxford: Fournier Trio. £15/£10 including refreshments. 7.30pm. 01865 274100.

The Library Pub, 182 Cowley Road, Oxford: Violent Chimes, Shotgun Six, Starbelly. Punk, emo, blues and rock n roll. 8pm. Free.

TUESDAY

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: The Hugh Turner Band. Guitar-led quartet. Jazz at the Bully. 8.30pm. Free.

WEDNESDAY

The North Wall Arts Centre, South Parade, Summertown: Sona Jobarteh. £14 (concessions £12). 8pm. 01865 391450.

The Queen’s College, Chapel, High Street, Oxford: The Queen’s College, Wednesday Organ Recital Series. David Ponsford (Cardiff University). Free with a retiring collection. 1.10pm. 01865 279120.

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Sari Schorr & The Engine Room. The Haven Club. Blues. 8pm. £10 (adv), £12 (old), £5 (NUS).

The Wheatsheaf, 129 High Street, Oxford: Stoldby, Brown Glove, Laima Bite. Local female vocalists and singer-songwriters. 7pm. £6.

The Mad Hatter, 43 Ifley Road, Oxford: Cahoots. Jazz. 8.30pm. £6 (£4).

Theatre

Burton Taylor Studio, Beaumont Street, Oxford: Jun 7-11, *Splendour*. Feminist play. 7.30pm. £6 (£5). Jun 14-18, *Ghosts*. 7.30pm. £6 (£5). 01865 305305.

Glee Club, Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford: Jun 11, Dave Fulton, Chris McCausland and Tom Toal. 7.15pm. £14.50. 0871 472 04007.

The Old Fire Station, 40 George Street, Oxford: Jun 11, *Perfect*. 12.30pm. Book a ticket, and pay what you can. 01865 305305.

Oxford Playhouse, Beaumont Street, Oxford: Jun 10, *Ballet Black*. Triple bill. 8pm. £11.50-£22. Jun 11, *The Oxford Revue and Friends*. Sketch comedy. 7.30pm. £11.50-£18. Jun 14-16, *Brideshead Revisited*. 7.30pm. £15-£31. 01865 305305.

Pegasus Theatre, Magdalen Road, Oxford: Jun 9, *Robert Newman – The Brain Show*. 7.30pm. £13(£9). Jun 11, *Chaturang*. Quartet of dance. 7.30pm. £13, £9 concessions, £6 under 18s. 01865 812150.

New Theatre, George Street, Oxford: Jun 13-18, *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*. 7.30pm. £15-£42.50 plus £4 transaction fee. 0844 871 3020.

North Wall Arts Centre, South Parade, Summertown: Jun 8-11, *Measure For Measure*. 7.30pm plus matinee on Thursday and Saturday at 2pm. Full price £16, concessions £13. 01865 319450.

Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot: Jun 11, *Think No Evil Of Us: My Life With Kenneth Williams*. 7.30pm. Age guide: 12+. £15, £13.50 (concs). 01235 515144.

Chipping Norton Theatre, Spring Street, Chipping Norton: Jun 9, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. 7.45pm. £14 (£12). Jun 10, Russell Kane. 7.45pm. £16.50. 01608 642350.

Corn Exchange, Market Place, Wallingford: Jun 13-17, Wallingford Corn Exchange Drama Festival 2016. Amateur drama groups compete. 7.45pm. £5 or reduced price for omnibus tickets. 01491 825000.

CakeSport

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Richard West took 3-46 in Banbury's victory over Tring Park

Patterson shines

in nail-biting win

Australian's century steers Banbury to fifth straight victory

KURTIS Patterson hit a century as Banbury made it five wins in a row with a thrilling three-wicket win over Tring Park. Despite Patterson's 142 off 129 balls, the Division 1 leaders made hard work passing their target of 261, needing two runs off the last ball. A second-wicket partnership of 76 between Benjamin Abbott and Saif Zaib put Tring in good shape in the Home Counties Premier League clash. Thomas Helm and Michael Payne's stand of 92 then helped the visitors to 210-4. But Banbury fought back

CRICKET

as Tring finished on 261-9, Richard West taking 3-46. A third-wicket stand of 126 between Patterson and Lloyd Sabin (41) steered Banbury into contention on 188-4. Patterson, who hit 13 fours and four sixes, was finally dismissed as the hosts closed in on their target. They still needed 11 off the final over and it was reduced to five when Tring were penalised for slow over rate. They then hit the two runs needed off the last ball.

B Abbott lbw West.....	64	Extras.....	20
S Zaib c Taylor b Sabin.....	35	Total (7 wkts, 50 ovs).....	262
T Helm c Patterson b Hill.....	65	Fall: 1-9, 2-15, 3-141, 4-188, 5-229, 6-247, 7-251.	
M Payne run out.....	52	Bowling: Helm 10-3-17-3, Stanway 10-2-54-1, Pratt 10-1-53-0, Payne 2-0-16-0, Gumbs 10-0-68-1, Wastling 40-20-20, Zaib 4-0-25-2.	
S Gumbs b West.....	14		
R Pritchard not out.....	12		
C Gaur c&b Sabin.....	1		
T Wastling b Wright.....	1		
D Pratt b West.....	3		
S Stanway not out.....	2		
Extras.....	11		
Total (9 wkts, 50 ovs).....	261		
Fall: 1-11, 2-87, 3-118, 4-210, 5-237, 6-244, 7-246, 8-251, 9-259.			
Bowling: Penhale 8-1-41-0, Taylor 7-1-38-1, Wright 10-1-53-1, West 10-0-46-3, Sabin 8-0-36-2, Hill 7-0-45-1.			
BANBURY			
C Haupt b Helm.....	5		
W Havtin c MacDonnell b Stanway.....	6		
K Patterson c Zaib b Helm.....	142		
L Sabin c MacDonnell b Zaib.....	41		
R West c Helm b Zaib.....	17		
J Megson b Gumbs.....	19		
A Blanchard b Helm.....	7		
K Penhale not out.....	2		
O Wright not out.....	3		

Banbury 20pts, Tring Park 9						
LATEST TABLE						
DIVISION 1						
P	W	D	L	NR	BP	Pts
Banbury	5	5	0	0	0	100
Henley	5	5	0	0	0	100
Burnham	5	3	0	2	0	12 72
H Wycombe	5	2	0	2	1	15 61
Finchampstead	5	2	0	2	1	14 60
Gt & Lt Tew	5	2	0	2	1	8 54
Tring Park	5	2	0	2	1	8 54
Slough	5	1	0	3	1	26 52
Harefield	5	0	0	4	1	26 32
Reading	5	0	0	5	0	25 25

STARS with Claire Petulengro

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ARIES

Mar 21-Apr 19

Friends may let you down this week, but you'll be discovering that they were never true friends to begin with. Mars pushes you to say things you may regret on Friday and it would be to your advantage to count to ten or you could end up letting a secret out of the bag which was not yours to tell. Ring now to hear how it's worth trusting fellow rams with your most intimate secrets.

0906 585 4360

LIBRA

Sep 23-Oct 22

Promises others made are broken, but they teach you a lot about who you can trust and who has just been blowing hot air. Family need to be made a priority this weekend or you could end up causing an atmosphere which will cast a dark cloud over your summer. The Moon brings out your confessional side on Friday. Ring now to delve deeper into those strange dream you're having.

0906 585 4366

TAURUS

Apr 20-May 20

Try not to let a competitive air ruin what should be an atmosphere of camaraderie in the workplace. Aspects suggest you could be venting your anger on current faces for things those in the past did to you. Venus brings an instant attraction your way which could well change everything. Dressing well on Friday can give you the edge on the competition. Ring now for your week in full.

0906 585 4361

GEMINI

May 21-Jun 20

This week offers you the chance to save some much needed funds and you no longer feel so vulnerable about your future. You are willing to face your fears head on and turn them into challenges and opportunities. Nights out this week put the spring back in your step and show that you're finally living again. Ring now to make sense of recent mixed signals.

0906 585 4362

CANCER

Jun 21-Jul 22

Live every day with love, not fear. If it is the latter then you should know by now that it's time to move on. The written word is more important than usual and you start to see where things went wrong professionally and what you need to do to rectify them. Mix ups with messages on Friday are dangerous. Go straight to the source. Ring now so I can foretell your future.

0906 585 4363

LEO

Jul 23-Aug 22

You start to feel so much more optimistic about the future. Things you did not have the energy to tackle before will now seem like minor obstacles for you to steer around. You learned a lot from a close one's major drama and it has made you a gentler, softer sign. Try not to rush love affairs, but build a base if they are to be the lasting kind. Ring now so we can make the most of your stars.

0906 585 4364

VIRGO

Aug 23-Sep 22

Try not to get involved in office politics this month as I know there is so much more to what is going on than first meets the eye. Your ruling planet Mercury gives you the power to deal with important or difficult faces, so use this as your week to face any fears and you will conquer them. Ring now to hear why I want you to act on impulse romantically this week.

0906 585 4365

SCORPIO

Oct 23-Nov 21

I know you are scared of what is ahead of you Scorpio, but let me tell you that if you can face what's ahead with your head held high, then you will succeed. Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Try to take some time out of your week to get the facts and figures which have been lacking. Ring now to hear why I know two careers beckon, not just one.

0906 585 4367

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 22-Dec 21

This week you can choose to make a difference. Previously, you had been sitting back and accepting what life threw at you, but no more. Fellow fire signs Aries and Leo help you find your childish side which can go a long way to you blowing off some steam. Flirtations on Thursday turn serious. Ring now so we can make your future the best it can be.

0906 585 4368

CAPRICORN

Dec 22-Jan 19

Decisions you made in your career earlier in year threw you off your chosen path and didn't help your finances either. A link with a new city or even a foreign country helps you to get your mojo back and proves that you were aiming too low. Give me a ring now to hear why this is such a powerful week to ask for what you want in life.

0906 585 4369

AQUARIUS

Jan 20-Feb 18

You've had your trust in others tested, that I see. The truth is that the people who love you the most will give you the freedom you need to be who you want to be. From Tuesday, you work out who has been subjecting you to emotional blackmail. An older face is not as helpless as they say. Step back and watch for a day or two. Ring now to hear which sign is worth compromising for.

0906 585 4370

PISCES

Feb 19-Mar 20

Don't be jealous of the attention that a loved one is giving to a face they work with. You know many of us often end up spending more time with people at work than we do those we live with. It doesn't mean they don't care for you. Call my starline to find out why you can stand with confidence.

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Announcements - Public Notices

Department for Transport

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

The Secretary of State gives notice of an Order made under Section 247 of the above Act entitled "The Stopping up of Highway (East Midlands) (No.13) Order 2016" authorising the stopping up of an irregular shaped western part width of Banbury Lane adjacent to the former carpenters' workshop at Thorpe Mandeville in the District of South Northamptonshire to enable development as permitted by South Northamptonshire Council, under reference S/2015/1975/FUL.

Copies of the Order may be obtained, free of charge, from the Secretary of State, National Transport Casework Team, Tyneside House, Skinnerburn Road, Newcastle Business Park, Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 7AR or nationalcasework@dft.gsi.gov.uk (quoting NATTRAN/EM/S247/2257) and may be inspected during normal opening hours at Middleton Cheney Post Office, 4 High Street, Middleton Cheney, OX17 2PB.

Any person aggrieved by or desiring to question the validity of or any provision within the Order, on the grounds that it is not within the powers of the above Act or that any requirement or regulation made has not been complied with, may, within 6 weeks of 09 June 2016 apply to the High Court for the suspension or quashing of the Order or of any provision included.

S Zamenzadeh, Casework Manager

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NEWSQUEST Media Group



Roads are being laid and trees planted as work gets under way at Graven Hill self-build site in Bicester; right, a typical scene at one of the other Build It Live! shows around the UK

Self-build show includes chance to visit a new site

ANYONE who likes the idea of building their own home should visit Build It Live! this weekend.

The self-build exhibition is at former RAF bomber station Bicester Heritage this Saturday and Sunday. The show includes more than 100 exhibitors plus seminars and building experts.

Chipping Norton-based architectural designer and TV presenter Charlie Luxton will also make an appearance.

By Gill Oliver
gill.oliver@nqo.com

Visitors will also have a chance to tour the Graven Hill development site, where up to 1,900 self-build homes will be built.

Hourly buses will run from Bicester Heritage to the self-build zone, where representatives from Cherwell District Council's Graven Hill Village

Homes Development Company will be on hand to answer questions.

Visitors will be able to learn more about the reservation process and plot passports which allow self-builders to construct their homes without needing individual applications, if they keep within guidelines of the plot passport.

Phase One at Graven Hill Village opens to people living and working in the Cherwell area from July 11.

Philip Singleton, managing director of Graven Hill Village Development Company, said: "Graven Hill is set to become the UK's largest ever self-build project so we are delighted to be working in partnership with Build It to bring this established event to the site."

"Not only will self-builders have access to more than 100 suppliers specialising in all aspects of the self-build process but they will also be

able to tour Graven Hill for the very first time."

This is the first time Build It Live!, organised by Build It magazine, has come to Bicester. Exhibitors include oak frame buildings specialists, housebuilders, aluminium bi-fold suppliers, glaziers and brick manufacturers. The show runs from 9.30am-5pm on June 11 and 12 and tickets cost £12.

■ To book see builditlive.co.uk

Contact property writer Gill Oliver with your stories on 01865 425475 or email propertyedit@nqo.com





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LETTINGS



Flat 3, Dorita House

Martin & Co are pleased to offer this one bedroom flat for rent on the Broughton Road. The property comprises: entrance hall, living room, kitchen and bedroom. It is unfurnished, neutrally decorated and is available from 6th June. The property is conveniently situated for the town centre and the train station. EPC Rating E.

£625



67 Waltham Gardens

Martin & Co are pleased to present a new to the market two bedroom house conveniently situated in Grimsbury within walking distance to the train station and the town centre. The property comprises: kitchen; living room; two bedrooms and a bathroom with bath and shower. The property also benefits from a rear enclosed garden. Available unfurnished. EPC Rating: D

£795



Room 3, 66 Broughton Road

Martin & Co are pleased to present a new to the market one bedroom room with ensuite shower in a shared house conveniently situated within walking distance to the town centre and train station. The room benefits from a kitchenette area also. The room is fully furnished and all bills are inclusive. Ideal for a single professional.

£550



119 Broom Way

Martin & Co are pleased to present this spacious three bedroom property. The property comprises a separate kitchen with fridge freezer and washing machine; spacious lounge overlooking the garden; upstairs there are three bedrooms and a family bathroom with bath and shower. The property benefits from a rear enclosed garden and allocated parking.

£875



25 Sage Close

Martin & Co are pleased to present a large three bedroom furnished property. The property comprises: spacious entrance hall with storage cupboard; dining room; kitchen with separate breakfast area. Good sized first floor lounge; separate utility room. The master bedroom benefits from fitted wardrobes and an ensuite shower room.

£1050



flat 2 Butchers Row

Martin & Co are pleased to present a new to the market stunning one bedroom apartment conveniently situated in the town centre within walking distance to all local amenities including the train station. The property comprises a spacious open plan kitchen and living area; one double bedroom and a separate bathroom with shower and WC.

£650



Elizabeth Rise

Martin & Co Banbury are pleased to present this three bedrooms detached property. The property comprises: Porch, entrance hallway, cloakroom/WC, sitting room, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, utility room, three good sized bedrooms, family bathroom, gas central heating, double glazing, single garage, off road car parking, large rear garden. EPC - D

£1050



flat 1, 41 Middleton Road

Martin & Co are pleased to present a new to the market two bedroom apartment conveniently situated within walking distance to the town centre and train station. The property comprises open plan kitchen living room; two bedrooms and bathroom with bath and shower. Ideal for a professional couple or single person. EPC Rating D

£695



60 Canterbury Close

Martin & Co are pleased to present a new to the market one bedroom house situated in a quiet location within walking distance to the town centre and the train station. The property comprises open plan kitchen and living room; one double bedroom and bathroom. The property is available unfurnished. Ideal for a single professional or a couple. EPC Rating: D

£625



18 Barcombe Close

Martin & Co Banbury are pleased to offer to the market, this one bedroom semi-detached house in the Hardwick area of Banbury. The property comprises: spacious lounge, kitchen, double bedroom with fitted wardrobes, and bathroom. EPC Rating D

£695



2 Kings Road

Martin & Co are pleased to present this two bedroom cottage situated in the village of Bloxham. The property benefits from one double bedroom and a second smaller bedroom / office. The bathroom contains a WC and a shower. Good size kitchen and living room. Washing machine and fridge available. EPC rating C

£825



flat 3 Enhance Court

Martin & Co are pleased to present a new to the market one bedroom stunning apartment situated conveniently in the town centre near to Banbury Cross. The property comprises: an open plan kitchen and living area; good size double bedroom; bathroom with bath and shower. EPC Rating: D

£725



7 Cherwell Wharf

Martin & Co Banbury are pleased to present, this 3 storey town house, situated next to the canal and close to town centre. The property comprises: two reception rooms, three double bedrooms, two bathrooms, kitchen and decked area to the rear of the property. Allocated parking. EPC Rating C

£975



67 Waltham Gardens

Martin & Co are pleased to present a new to the market two bedroom house conveniently situated in Grimsbury within walking distance to the train station and the town centre. The property comprises: kitchen; living room; two bedrooms and a bathroom with bath and shower. The property also benefits from a rear enclosed garden. EPC Rating: D

£795



46 Centre Street

Martin & Co are pleased to present a spacious four bedroom mid terraced property situated in Grimsbury within walking distance to the town centre and train station. The property comprises two reception rooms; kitchen; upstairs there are four bedrooms on 2 split levels. The master bedroom benefits from an ensuite bathroom. EPC Rating: D.

£995



31 Lord Feilding Close

Two bedroom staggered terraced property located north of Banbury in Hanwell Fields. The property comprises of: living room, kitchen, two bedrooms and a bathroom. The property also has gas central heating, double glazing throughout, spacious enclosed rear garden, ground floor W/C and a car port. EPC Rating C

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Motors - first for new cars

New Car Road Test

The definitive view
by Andy Enright

Audi's estate statement of intent



THE fifth generation Audi A4 Avant claims to be class-leadingly efficient, hi-tech and, yes, practical. There's a 510-litre boot that's bigger than you might expect from a car in the compact executive market segment and the usual cool, classy Audi ambience. You'd like one.

Background
Every now and then, the car industry seizes upon a concept and rival manufacturers will indulge in a feeding frenzy to saturate the market. With hindsight, some of these concepts aren't at all clever. In the late Eighties, virtually every manufacturer rushed a four-wheel drive saloon car, hatchback or coupe to market. The Nineties saw a sudden spike in sales of small SUVs that fell over when pointed at a corner, while in the early Noughties, premium manufacturers fell over themselves to launch estate versions of their compact executive models that often actually held less luggage than the saloon cars they were based on. Every one of them an evolutionary dead end. In contrast, the latest smartly-styled and more efficient Audi A4 Avant demonstrates that in the battle between fashion and functionality, there's only ever one long term victor.

Driving Experience
The A4 has always struck an appealing balance between handling and comfort and with this MK5 Avant model, the Ingolstadt engineers have sought to improve its credentials still further by developing a new five-link suspension system.
Optional adjustable shock absorbers with 'sports' and 'comfort' modes will enable owners to get the most from this and a dynamic steering system is another extra cost feature that'll reward those you like their driving. Both features can be controlled through the standard Audi drive select driving-dynamics system, which alters throttle response and auto gear-shift timings in its most basic form. Talking of auto gearshifts, the old CVT automatic gearbox has gone, replaced by a seven speed dual clutch 'S tronic' unit that claims to be able to improve both performance and fuel consumption.

Design and Build
Styling is a subjective matter, and it's probably not our place to tell you what looks good but let's just say that this MK5 model A4 Avant has dodged the ugly stick by quite some margin. The stylists have been very clever in that they have retained a fairly high roofline at the back for load volume purposes

but have artfully used chrome finishing to draw the eye to the sleek window lines instead.
This time round, the A4 is lighter - significantly so in fact. A hi-tech 'MLB' platform uses high strength steel and aluminium to reduce weight by up to 120kg compared to the old model, despite this MK5 design growing in all areas except height. As for styling, well here there's a clear evolution on what went before, with all features sharpened and defined. Special attention has been paid to aerodynamics, this A4 boasting the lowest drag coefficient in its class.

Market and Model
Prices start at just over £27,000, which means a premium of around £1,400 over the saloon model. That means this A4 Avant is competitively priced against its premium rivals when trim levels and power outputs are taken into account. There's a choice of three transmission options, a six-speed manual gearbox, plus two auto set-ups, a seven-speed dual-clutch S tronic and an older-tech eight-speed tiptronic.
All trim levels include alloy wheels of at least 17-inches in size, Xenon headlights with LED daytime running lights, the 'Audi smartphone' interface, the 'Audi drive select' driving dynamics sys-

tem, three-zone climate control and a 7-inch colour MMI infotainment monitor. We'd want to look at a couple of key options. The 'Audi phone box' connects smartphones to the on-board antenna and charges them.
Meanwhile, for discerning hi-fi fans, a Bang & Olufsen 3D Sound System with innovative 3D sound is available.

Cost of Ownership
If you don't care about the bonnet badge, it's tempting to think that you could save £4,000 or so on a mechanically very similar Volkswagen Passat Estate but before you do, make sure to take residual values into account. Add all the figures up at the end of the day and you may well find that there's less in it than you thought.
Running costs are of course a vital consideration in this segment and this A4 offers some impressive numbers thanks to this generation model's weight reductions and that sleeker shape. The volume 2.0 TDI 150PS ultra diesel Avant variant should return over 70mpg on the combined cycle and manages CO2 emissions of 104g/km. Opt for the pokier 2.0 TDI 190PS Avant variant and the fuel figure will be similar, while the CO2 reading is still 106g/km, so there's no huge penalty for the extra performance.

Summary
Only very rarely does an excellent product fail. When this happens, it is usually down to poor promotion, but that's certainly not going to be the case with Audi's marketing machine at work. The truth is that this MK5 model A4 Avant is a very tough car to fault. It's superbly built, it's big enough to make a decent first of being a properly practical estate car, it rides on the exemplary A4 chassis so is a strong proposition for enthusiastic drivers and, when whole life costs are examined, it's surprisingly cost effective to run.

Facts at a glance
CAR: Audi A4 Avant range
PRICES: £27,300 - £40,350 - on the road
INSURANCE GROUPS: 19 - 36
CO2 EMISSIONS: 99-169g/km
PERFORMANCE: [2.0 TDI ultra 150PS] 0-62mph 9.2s / Max Speed 130mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION: [2.0 TDI ultra 150PS] (combined) 67.3mpg
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Motors - first for used cars

Used Car Road Test

by Jonathan Crouch



Sense and sensibility



TOYOTA'S Avensis has always provided customers in the medium range Mondeo segment with a safe, conservative set of wheels. The third generation version continued that tradition when it was first launched in 2008, but it lacked a little in terms of style and technology. Toyota aimed to put that right when the time came for this design's first facelift in 2011 and the changes made were enough to sustain this car until further more far-reaching changes could be made in 2015. So, does an Avensis from this era make secondhand sense? Let's find out.

The History

Toyota has its own idea of what a medium range Mondeo-sized car should be. It isn't shared by most motoring hacks but it is appreciated by business people who spend many miles in the company's Avensis model. For these drivers - and the family buyers like them - cutting edge handling and fancy design are all very nice. But they'd cheerfully swap that final tenth of turn-in and that avant garde dashboard for more practical virtues. Running costs

that equal a lower benefit-in-kind tax rating and more in their pay packet. Technology that keeps them in communication on the move and gets them home quicker. These are the people that the third generation Avensis was created for in 2008. They weren't quite satisfied by that car but they responded much better to this facelifted version, first introduced in 2011.

It featured greater efficiency, more technology and a smarter look. Just enough to meet the class standard so that there was nothing to distract the attention from the sensible stuff this car has always done so well. It was just enough to keep this Toyota competitive in the face of fine competition from the Mondeos, Insignias and Passats it was up against in the medium range segment and this version of the car sold until a more far-reaching facelift was announced in mid-2015.

What To Look For

The Avensis has built an enviable reputation for reliability and this third generation car builds on it. Only a few very minor issues have

surfaced that are covered under warranty. Our research has uncovered very few issues, some have had issues with EGR valves getting stuck and leading to an occasional loss of engine power (clean it with WD40 and problem is solved). In case you want to replace it, the price is £270. Otherwise, we found a report of a failed gearbox bearing after 40,000 miles (replacement cost £550) - and that's about it.

On The Road

Here's a car designed very much for the people who will drive it. Those who have to cover long distances quickly and use the time while they do effectively. Little point then, in the range providing us with a 'sporty' model. But that doesn't mean there isn't plenty of punch across the engine line-up. Most are satisfied with the volume unit, the 124bhp 2.0-litre D-4D diesel, which on the post-2011 model offered a beefier 310Nm torque figure that delivered 20% more pulling power.

You hardly have to stir the six-speed manual gearbox at all for

instant poke in almost every gear. For those who are in search of a little more performance, there's a 148bhp 2.2-litre version of this unit, the main virtue of which is that it also offers an automatic gearbox option.

Petrol people are becoming a little thin on the ground, but those who do want to fuel from the green pump have the option of a 145bhp 1.8-litre Valvematic variant, with drive either by 6-speed manual or Multidrive S auto transmission with steering wheel mounted paddle shifts. All of which is much as it was on the original post-2008 version of this third generation Avensis - as is the driving experience on offer, though those owners well familiar with earlier versions of this MK3 model will be the first to appreciate the changes made to improve it. The suspension tweaks for example - though we can't help feeling that these actually made the ride a touch less settled over the poorest surfaces. It's still great on the major routes though, an environment in which you'll appreciate the useful strides forward Toyota made with the

Avensis in this form when it comes to refinement.

Overall

We'll cut straight to the chase here: the Avensis is well worth a look if you're buying in the Mondeo medium range segment. If you can stretch to the improved 2011 to 2015-era version of the MK3 model that we've been looking at here, you'll get a strong and sensible package.

By improving efficiency and incorporating some seriously impressive technology on board, Toyota forced this car back into class contention at its launch in 2011. True, it could still be more exciting, both to look at and to drive, but you can see why the Japanese brand wasn't keen to go too far and upset the legions of customers attracted by the sensible charms of previous Avensis models. The company knows that the medium range market is closely fought and highly populated, with buying decisions often coming down to the smallest detail. And worryingly for some of its rivals, this car seems to have got many of the details that really matter just about right.

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Witney Gazette

Motors - first for new cars

New Car Launch Model Of The Week

by Jonathan Crouch

Efficiency you can warm to



KIA needed a small Juke-style compact Crossover model. And it also wanted a hybrid able to appeal to buyers who can't quite stretch to a Toyota Prius. The Niro smartly packages up both requirements into one potentially appealing product.

Background

For some time, Kia has known that it needed another small Crossover model to slot in below its strong-selling Sportage. Yes, the brand has the Soul range, but that's a little quirky for some tastes and it hasn't proved as attractive to Juke and Captur buyers as the Korean brand would have liked. This Niro still won't take on those kinds of cars in volume sales terms but it's still likely to make quite an impact in this fast-growing segment.

Why? Well this is the first hybrid car of this kind and Kia thinks it will appeal not only to Juke folk but also to customers who want a more affordable take on petrol/electric technology.

Driving Experience

Under the bonnet lies a 1.6-litre petrol/electric hybrid powerplant of the non-plug-in variety. The petrol unit puts out 102bhp and that's bolstered by a 42bhp electric motor mounted on the transmission and the whole package is driven by a

6-speed CVT auto gearbox. As you'd expect from a hybrid, regenerative braking is used to send power back to the battery, but Kia says it's paid special attention to brake feel, reducing the grabby nature that you get from the brakes in other hybrids.

The transmission is the latest version of Kia's 6DCT 'box, re-engineered specifically for use with the Niro's advanced hybrid powertrain, delivering a more direct and immediate response - and a more entertaining drive - than a traditional continuously-variable transmission would. The Niro's 6DCT is able to shift gears automatically, while keener drivers can pull the gear lever towards them to put the car into Manual Sports mode and allow manual shifting.

Design and Build

The Niro occupies a new space within the brand's model line-up in terms of its size. It's 4,355mm in length, 1,800mm wide and 1,535mm tall, making it smaller overall than the brand's larger Sportage Crossover, though occupying a larger footprint than the cee'd hatchback. There's nothing particularly exciting about the shape but it's likely to chime with buyers in the compact Crossover segment and has a relatively sleek 0.29Cd drag factor. The relatively wide stance is

intended to portray stability and a low centre of gravity. With a relatively long bonnet, short overhangs, elevated headlamps and rising shoulder line, the Niro's styling is certainly a break away from more sensible Prius-style hybrid models.

The silhouette tapers slightly towards the rear of the vehicle, ending in a subtle rear roof spoiler, elevated tail-lamps and a wide, squared-off rear bumper. Combined with bold wheel arches, the design places greater visual volume over the rear haunches. Inside, the cabin has been designed to give an impression of space and modernity, with a wide dashboard and defined horizontal lines. The Niro follows the most recent Kia models in offering high quality, soft-touch materials throughout the interior.

Market and Model

Pricing hasn't yet been announced, but you can expect it to be around the £20,000 mark. Expect the Niro to be well equipped with lots of technology - things like a 7-inch touchscreen with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. Plus there are safety features such as Blind Spot Detection with Rear Cross Traffic Alert and Lane Change Assist, Advanced Smart Cruise Control, Lane Departure Warning and Autonomous Emergency Braking.

Kia's Vehicle Stability Management (VSM) system is fitted as standard, helping to ensure stability under braking and cornering by carefully controlling the vehicle's Electronic Stability Control and electric motor-driven power steering. If the system detects a loss of traction, VSM helps the driver to remain safely in control of the vehicle.

Cost of Ownership

We should start by saying that this is a conventional hybrid rather than one of the Plug-in variety. Kia can offer this technology - indeed it does so in the larger Optima model - but in order to keep the Niro's price competitive, it isn't currently available here. So, how do the figures stack up? Well, this model's headline efficiency figures can't match those of Toyota's Prius but they're still pretty impressive: 73.6mpg on the combined cycle and 89g/km of CO2.

That's achieved using some impressive tech. The Niro uses the a Lithium-Ion Polymer battery that is both compact and powerful - so much so that Kia has been able to do away with a 12v battery in the car.

Kia has also developed a Predictive Energy Control system to use navigation data that predicts changes to the road ahead and maximises the efficiency of the hybrid system. The 1.56 kWh lithium-ion polymer

battery pack is the lightest and most efficient pack used by Kia to date, with up to 50% higher energy density and 13% greater energy efficiency than the battery packs found in key rivals. Weighing just 33 kg, the Niro's battery pack - with an advanced power relay - allows the battery to regenerate electrical energy under deceleration.

Summary

Matching hybrid power with Crossover trendiness was always going to make an appealing combination and the Niro delivers exactly that. We're a little disappointed that there are no more affordable conventionally-engined versions but that apart, we like the look of what's on offer here.

Facts at a glance
CAR: Kia Niro
PRICES: £20,000 [est]
INSURANCE GROUPS: TBC
CO2 EMISSIONS: 89g/km
PERFORMANCE: TBC
FUEL CONSUMPTION: (combined) 73.6mpg [est]
STANDARD SAFETY FEATURES: ESP, twin front, side and curtain airbags, ABS with EBA and EBD
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